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THE

STORY

OF

GRISELDA.

With Three Copperplates.

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GRISELDA.

WALTER, marquis of Saluzzo, in Lombardy, was young, handsome, and well made; he was kind to every body; granted all the petitions of his subjects; and was always upon the watch to relieve their distresses. No sovereign was more beloved than he. Yet he had one fault. Somebody had put it into his head, while he was a boy, that he should take care to preserve his liberty; and that, if he was not upon his guard, he would be brought into subjection before he was aware, and not be able to rise and go to bed; to ride, or to walk; to eat, or to fast; to be in com-

pany, or alone, just when and how he liked.

Walter was exceedingly fond of hunting and hawking; and of all things in the world, he was most afraid of a wife, who, if she had a mind to talk, would not let him sleep; and, if she frowned, would be grieved if he was happy.

The subjects of Walter were exceedingly sorry that he had got such a strange notion into his head. They loved him; they and their forefathers had lived content under him and his ancestors; but every now and then they said to each other: "If any thing should happen to our dear marquis, what would become of us? We shall become slaves to a foreign

reign lord, and people will no longer read of the marquises of Saluzzo among the great sovereigns of Europe."

They thought so much of this, that at last they could no longer keep their thoughts to themselves, and prevailed upon one of their number, whom the marquis loved to hear talk, to tell lord Walter their grievance. "We love you very much, sir," said he, "no subjects love a prince so much; but why will you not make us happy by giving us a marchioness, and presenting us with children who may reign after you, if we should ever be so unfortunate as to see you die? If you please, sir, we have fixed upon a lady, who we

have no doubt will exactly suit you: she is of a very rich and noble family, and will make both you and us as happy as the day is long."

Lord Walter looked very grave at this speech; he took a moment to think, and at length spoke thus: "My friends, I did never think to wed; I have always been of opinion that a rich and noble wife would have too many humours to leave her husband free to act as he pleased. I have always been used to have my own way, and I must have it; yet I see that your petition rises out of your love for me, and I will grant it."

At these words the whole assembly set up a general shout, and cried with

The Wedding Day.

London. Published July 1804, by Tabart & Co.

with one voice: "Long live Walter, marquis of Saluzzo!"

"Yet one thing," said the marquis, "I must add: I excuse you from the performance of your kind offer of choosing a wife for me: since I must marry, I will choose with my own eyes; and this thing I exact from you, that you shall all solemnly promise, whomever I make choice of, be she young or old, handsome or ugly, rich or poor, you shall obey her as your lady and mistress, and behave as lovingly to her as you have always done to me." They all promised:—they thought in their hearts, "Our lord marquis, who is so young and handsome, will never choose a wife that is ugly and old; and if she

is poor or of decayed nobility, he has fortune enough for both."

They begged, however, that they might make one more petition: the same person spoke for them that had spoken at first. "Ah! dear lord Walter," said he, "the news you tell us is so joyful that we know not how to believe it: you have often said to your friends that you never would marry, and we are afraid you are not in earnest: would you be so good as fix the day of your marriage? and we shall then be easy and light of heart, and no one will doubt your goodness." Said lord Walter, "I will be married this day month, the 14th of July."

Not far from the palace of the mar-

quis

quis there was an exceedingly poor village, in which nobody lived but shepherds and herdsmen. One house belonged to the herds, and one to the herdsmen, all through the village. Of the people who lived there, there was one poorer than all the rest, and his name was Janicola. He had been a herdsman, but was past his labour; he was lame and almost blind. This poor old man had one daughter, named Griselda: she was extremely beautiful, but her mind was a thousand times more virtuous than her countenance was pleasing; she was simple in her diet, constant in her labour, and never sought for idleness or indulgence: her drink was water of the spring,

and her bed was the hardest of any maiden in the village. But all her care was to attend upon her father: she got money to support him by her spinning; she collected and prepared the fruits and herbs that made his dinner; and many times, when the old man would have died of infirmity and age, Griselda by her kindness and care still kept him alive. Lord Walter had often observed this poor girl as he went a-hunting: he had looked upon her with eyes of admiration; pleased with her simplicity, her industry, and her love of her father, and entertaining no desire to disturb her in these honest pursuits.

In the mean time the 14th of July was near at hand; and as no man could

could perceive that the marquis had frequented more than usually the houses of his rich neighbours, or had asked any one of their daughters in marriage, they began to fear that he was deluding them. The preparations for the marriage however went on; the palace was new painted and new furnished; plenty of delicacies were provided for the wedding-dinner; and robes, and gold, and jewels, prepared for the bride.

At length the day for the marriage arrived. The marquis dressed himself in clothes all covered with gold and silver; his lords and ladies did the like: they were mounted on fine horses with glittering trappings, and horns, and trumpets, and fifes, and

drums went before them. But where was lord Walter's bride?

They were to go by the village in which poor Janicola lived. Griselda heard that this was the day upon which lord Walter was to be married, and she did her work very early, that she might see the procession. As lord Walter rode along, all the doors and windows were crowded with the cottagers and the maidens; and Griselda, among the rest, stood at her door, and pushed forward her head that she might see the marquis.

Lord Walter stopped exactly at Janicola's door; he called to Griselda, and said: "Griselda, where is your father?" "My lord," said the poor maiden, "I will go and fetch

fetch him." "No," replied the marquis, "I will come in and speak to him." Lord Walter went in and spoke to him alone, and told him that if he approved of it, he was resolved to make Griselda his wife. He then called for Griselda.

"Poor maiden," said he, "you have heard that I am to be married today; I and your father have agreed that you shall be my bride, and marchioness of Saluzzo: do you consent to it? Do not deceive yourself, Griselda:—Why do you think I am willing to marry you, a poor herdsman's daughter, and not one of the daughters of the lords, marquises and dukes, my neighbours? It is because I will have a wife that will

honour and obey me. When I say Yea, you must not say Nay; you must neither contradict me by words, nor cross me by frowning looks; and whatever I shall think proper to do, you must be pleased, and cheerful, and content. Do you consent to this?" Griselda answered: "I will be whatever you, the lord and master of my native country, shall command; and rather than disobey you, in word or thought, I will consent to die." "This is enough, Griselda," said he.

The marquis then ordered that a chest which he had directed to be brought along with him, full of ornaments fitting for a bride, should be taken into Janicola's house: he further

ther commanded that the ladies of the palace should go in to dress Griselda, while he and his attendants waited without. Griselda soon made her appearance, but so changed by her fine clothes and jewels, that, instead of a herdsman's daughter, she seemed as if she had been born a queen. Lord Walter then placed her on a snow-white horse, with a saddle-cloth of crimson velvet edged with a broad gold fringe. In this state she and the marquis rode to the palace, where the priest waited in a chapel prepared for the purpose, and they were immediately married.

It is impossible to express how well the new marchioness behaved in her elevated situation: she took

care of every thing that went on in the kitchen, the cellar, the store-room, and every part of the palace: she was always obedient to her husband, and always good-humoured; and sometimes, when the marquis went abroad for a few days, or a week, she conducted all the affairs of the state with the utmost propriety, redressed grievances, reconciled quarrels, and relieved the wants of the poor; so that every body that had loved lord Walter very much before, now exclaimed: "What a wise man is our lord! How did he contrive to discern this miracle of a woman in an ox's stall, and to choose her before all the princesses of the neighbouring countries?"

A short

A short time after their marriage, Griselda brought the marquis a daughter. The marquis and all his people were exceedingly rejoiced at this; for, though they had rather it had been a son, they said: "Perhaps the next child the marchioness brings us may be a son."

Who now so happy as lord Walter, marquis of Saluzzo? He had a child; he had an obedient wife; he had subjects that loved him, and applauded his choice of a marchioness. Lord Walter could not however forget the thoughts which had run in his head before he was married, and how he had supposed that a bachelor's life was freedom, and marriage was nothing but a state of slavery.

He determined therefore, though he had indeed seen enough already of Griselda's goodness, to put her to a further trial: and thus he proceeded.

He came into Griselda's chamber one summer's evening, just when the sun was setting, and looking with a stern countenance, as if he had something very heavy upon his mind, he said: "Griselda, I hope the prosperity and magnificence in which you now live have not made you forget the russet gown and poor way of living out of which I have taken you; it is no long time ago, and it would be a sad disgrace if you were to forget what you so lately were. Griselda, there is no living creature that hears me but ourselves, and I must

speak

speak my mind to you freely. I love you very much; I have no fault to find with you; you have always proved yourself a good wife to me: but there are people in Saluzzo who do not think so kindly of you as I do; the lords of my court think it a great shame to be subject to a poor herdsman's daughter, and the ladies are still more displeased to pay attendance to a woman of so mean parentage: particularly since the birth of your daughter, they are more discontented than ever. Griselda, what shall I do? I am unwilling to give you pain, but I must attend to the speeches of my subjects, and satisfy their desires. Are you prepared for the consequences?"

Griselda

Griselda meekly replied: "My lord, I and my child are yours; do with us as you please; there is nothing that you can command that I will think hardly of." "Very well," said the marquis, and went away.

A few minutes after, one of lord Walter's attendants came into Griselda's chamber. He was a serjeant-at-arms, a very tall man with a fierce look and rough voice. As soon as he saw her, he said: "Madam, I am very sorry for the errand upon which I come; but lords must be obeyed, and wives and subjects must not say nay; I am come to take your child from you."

Saying this, he snatched the little girl out of the cradle, and made a face

as

as if he was going to kill it in a moment. Griselda looked on, but uttered no sigh and shed no tear; she said: "All that my lord orders you to do, do; but let me kiss my child before it is killed." He then gave it to her, and she put it to her bosom, almost smothered it with kisses, and said: "God bless you, my child! for you must die to-night." Griselda said besides: "One thing I would beg of you, unless my lord has given orders to the contrary;—bury this child in a coffin and a grave, and do not let the birds and beasts tear it to pieces." The serjeant answered never a word, and went away.

Lord

Lord Walter ordered the serjeant to carry the child to his sister, the countess of Pavia, and wrote a letter with it, desiring her to bring it up with the greatest tenderness, but to tell no one whose child it was.

Lord Walter went soon after into his wife's chamber, and carefully watched her then and for many following days, whether she would betray any resentment or displeasure for the calamity he had put upon her. But Griselda was always the same; she received him with smiles and affection; was eager to do him service, and prepare for him every thing that might give him pleasure; and never, either in jest or earnest, did her daughter's

daughter's name drop from her lips, or did she make the least allusion to her unhappy fate.

Lord Walter and Griselda lived thus four years longer, and at the end of four years she brought the marquis a son. This event gave both him and his subjects the highest pleasure; the child was very beautiful, and was every where gladly acknowledged as heir to the marquisate. It thrived well till it was two years old, and was able to walk, and speak, and do fifty things by which little children amuse their friends.

Lord Walter might now have been content; but still the same thoughts haunted his mind, and he was determined to make another trial of

Griselda. He said to his wife: "I am grieved to inform you, that my people since the birth of my son are more discontented and seditious than ever; they say that this is worst of all, and that they could endure any thing rather than that the grandson of Janicola, a poor herdsman, should, after my death, become their master, and marquis of Saluzzo. Griselda, you must submit, and must part with your son, this pretty little boy of two years old, as you parted with your baby-daughter." What lord Walter spoke was no sooner said than done; the child was taken away; Griselda thought it was killed; and it was sent as the former had been to the countess of Pavia.

After

After this event lord Walter and Griselda lived together for eight years more, without any considerable accident, till at a certain time, when the marquis was celebrating his birth-day before all the lords of his court, and the dinner was finished, and the tables removed, he said publicly to his wife; "Griselda, I have unpleasing tidings to tell you; you must leave my house, and cease to be my wife, for I am going to marry a young lady of high quality, and of admirable beauty. My people, as you know, have long been discontented with my having married so much below my dignity. They wish for an heir to my marquisate; and they will not admit the grandson of a

poor

poor herdsman to assume that state. I am very sorry for this; I could have been contented with you for my wife to my life's end; but I may not do as every ploughman may in this respect: in short, I have yielded to the prayers of my people; the pope has granted me a divorce, and I expect my new wife the day after to-morrow. Go you back to your father's house, he is still living, and will still love you; and, that you may have no reason to complain of my want of liberality, I grant you to carry back with you your dower and all the fortune you brought me in marriage."

Griselda, without changing countenance, meekly replied: "My lord, I

am

am not surprised at what you now say. I never thought myself worthy to be your wife, or even your chambermaid. I thank God and you for all the happiness I have enjoyed for fourteen years, and now willingly submit to your pleasure, and will return to the cottage in which I was born. As for the fortune, my lord, that I brought, it consisted only of the russet gown and coarse clothes that I had then on my back, and which now it would be hard to find. This one thing then I request; I willingly restore to you my robes and my jewels; I restore here on the spot my wedding ring; but do not, my lord, send me naked out of your house. Let me keep the shift I have on;

on; and do you, of your bounty, give me the mantle in which I sometimes used to see you when you returned home late from a day's sport; in that I will wrap myself, and return bare-headed and bare-footed, as you first saw me, to my father's house."

The day after Griselda's departure, lord Walter sent desiring to speak with her. "Griselda," said he, "to-morrow is my wedding-day; I expect the count of Pavia, with my sister his countess, and the beautiful maiden whom I have elected marchioness of Saluzzo. I am desirous of giving her a costly reception, and making my wedding the most splendid festival that ever was seen in Lombardy. But I have no dame for

my

my house-keeper that understands the management of my apartments, my furniture, and my table, so well as you. I therefore request you to come once more to my palace, and see all things done properly on this happy occasion."

"My lord," replied. Griselda, "there is nothing that can give me greater pleasure, than to find that I can still render some small service to a nobleman to whom I owe more than I can ever pay."

Having said this, Griselda bestirred herself about the house, conjuring the chambermaids to hasten, and sweep, and shake, and put every thing in order; she herself set out the tables,

and

and regulated the beaufets and the sideboards, and directed all the dishes, and the jellies, and custards, and sweetmeats, for the intended feast. This took up all that evening and the following morning.

About noon the new marchioness, with the count of Pavia, and a royal attendance, entered Saluzzo: the young lady was only fourteen, and as beautiful as the day: her young brother, ten years old, rode beside her. The common people, as the procession passed along the streets and arrived at the palace, clapped their hands and shouted, saying that lord Walter was no fool, and that this young lady was more beautiful

and

The Officer taking away the Child.

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and tender of age, as well as, no doubt, of higher descent than Janicola's daughter.

Griselda understood by the shouting that the lady was arrived, and went down into the hall with the other servants to receive her. Before the dinner was ready, lord Walter showed his brother-in-law the count of Pavia, and all his company, the different apartments of the palace; and he ordered Griselda to attend with the rest. When they had seen the curiosities with which it abounded, the marquis led his guests into the drawing-room, who debated secretly with themselves what sort of person this Griselda could be. She had on a russet gown, and was meanly clad;

yet there was a grace, a dignity, an ease and courteousness in her manner, more befitting a princess than a servant.

The dinner was now almost ready, and lord Walter was informed that in half an hour the guests would be summoned to the table: he sent once more for Griselda: "Griselda," says he, "you are a woman of excellent judgment, and I want your opinion in this matter; what think you of my new chosen bride, and of her beauty?"

"My lord," replied Griselda, "a fairer creature, in my opinion, never trod the face of the earth; she seems worthy of a throne; I hope you will be happy together; I hope you will have

have some consideration and forbearance for her tender years, and seeming gentle temper, and God give you many many years of concord, prosperity, and peace!"

Lord Walter had now seen the patience and unalterable sweetness of Griselda; she was at all times cheerful and mild, and obedient and obliging; innocence was conspicuous in her demeanour, and duty in every action of her life.

"Griselda, it is enough:—I have seen your faith and your benignity; I have tried you with princely magnificence, and meanest attire; no woman was ever brought to so severe and perilous a touchstone as you have been. Griselda, you are my wife: I never

never had, and I never will have, any other. This young lady, whom you have looked upon as my intended bride, tall and womanly as she looks, is your daughter and mine. This young boy, ten years of age, is her brother, and my heir: I sent them away to my sister, the countess of Pavia, and charged her to breed them tenderly and royally."

Saying this, lord Walter kissed her again and again, and presented her children to her. She took them in her arms, and wept as if her heart would burst.

"My lord," said she, "may God reward you for your kindness! You have done me a thousand benefits, but this is the greatest of all. I have

ever

ever loved you above all the world; all my care has been, how I could please you; and now I am restored to your love, I shall die content whenever Providence shall call me."

She then turned to her children: "Oh, dear! oh, tender! oh, young children mine!" said she, "your woeful mother believed that dogs had eaten you, or that the birds had torn you to pieces: what a good father is yours, who has brought you up so carefully, and now restored you to your mother!"

While she talked thus, and thus was agitated with passion and gratitude, the whole assembly wept; there was not a dry eye in the place: the ladies then conducted her to her

chamber, where they stripped her of her russet gown, and put on her a most beautiful garment of cloth of gold. They then passed into the saloon, where the dinner was set, and this festival was a more splendid and happpy one than that of her marriage. Lord Walter never attempted to put her to any further proof; he knew by experience that she was superior to every temptation. She was happy in her son and daughter, who were always dutiful to her: and thus her patience and her meekness, her good-temper and invincible fortitude, met with their full reward.

THE END.

R. Taylor and Co. Black-Horse-Court.

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